

ADVANCED CALL SCREENING APPLIANCE

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[43] According to the invention, a network interface device for processing a telephone call is disclosed. The network interface device includes a first and second communication interfaces, a telephone switch and a controller. The first communication interface is coupled to at least one of a wireless phone network, a public switched telephone network (PSTN), and a voice over Internet protocol (VOIP) network. The first communication interface receives the telephone call from any of a number of callers that are remote to the network interface device. The second communication interface coupled to one or more phones at a user location where the one or more phones are associated with a telephone number that any of the callers can use to call the one or more phones. The telephone switch is coupled to both of the first communication interface and second communication interface and optionally routes an incoming phone call to the second communication interface if one or more access control rules permit routing the incoming phone call to the second communication interface. The controller analyzes the one or more access control rules and either routes the incoming phone call from the first communication interface to the second communication interface or prevents the incoming phone call from reaching the second communication interface. The one or more phones ring when the incoming call is routed to the second communication interface.